

January 2023

# Robert Land Academy The Loyalist

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Tim Hudak  
Board Chair

Just before the Christmas break the Robert Land Academy Board of Governors held the Annual General Meeting (AGM). During the 2022 AGM I had the very distinct honour of being elected chair. I hope I can fill the big shoes left behind by the previous chair, Mr. Bob Wright. And we are grateful for Bob's stellar, inclusive and steady leadership during some

very challenging times. Happily, he has agreed to stay on the Board as Past Chair. Bob is just one of a group of board members from varied backgrounds who bring incredible talent and experience to the Academy's Board of Governors.

Before being named CEO of the Ontario Real Estate Association (OREA) in 2016 I was immensely proud to serve the community of West Lincoln and surrounding areas as Member of Provincial Parliament (MPP). In more than 20 years as an MPP I met so many wonderful people; worked with great community leaders; and visited so many incredible local institutions and businesses. This is how I was first acquainted with Robert Land Academy.



I visited the school in my capacity as MPP several times, on one of those trips I accompanied then Premier of Ontario Mike Harris. When I first visited the school, I was impressed with the Academy, its mission, and the dedicated staff. I was even more impressed when I learned of the school's record of success, with 100% acceptance of graduating students into their post-secondary program of choice over the past dozen years in a row. This

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## C Company Report

# Being RLA student brings connection to dad

DBar Paterson

I came to RLA in 2021 during a most special and exciting time for the Academy; the Fall Exercise. At the time, I had no grasp of the significance of the exercise or even what RLA is by itself. I had heard vague stories about the Academy from my father a couple of times and he couldn't seem to remember a whole lot about RLA. That is until the Headmaster, Lieutenant Colonel Smid, invited all alumni to come participate in the Fall Exercise. So my father, James Paterson, took his two boys with him to see the Academy and Exercise first hand. For my father being invited back was a chance to reunite with the Academy; potentially see some familiar faces; and have a fun Fall Ex. For myself and my brother, all we knew was that we're going to visit a military school. Within the four days that my brother, father and I were at the Academy we got to have a great look at what RLA is like for the most part. My best memories from the visit were getting to see some discipline, eating great food, spending the last day of the Fall Ex with Captain Lee's group and getting to see the RLA experience close up. That trip was a full factor, for myself and

potentially my brother, to come to RLA.

Being the son of an alumni also contributes to me making the decision to come to the Academy. After, and during, the exercise I heard lots more stories about the Academy and it sparked curiosity and interest in RLA for me and it eventually drove me to decide that I wanted to be at the Academy for potentially the last of my high school career.

The stories I've heard and the questions I've asked to my dad about the Academy has given us a similar interest in this place and have in turn made us closer in a way and it also granted me some background knowledge of the Academy on intake day.

My first day was the beginning of my life at RLA, I knew mostly what to expect, and what to be ready for. Parts of the knowledge are also useful to me today at the Academy. All because of my dad.

I often get asked questions such as "what rank was your dad? What job did he have? Did he ever go on suspension? What was it like back in the day?"

All of these questions are fun to answer, and sometimes, it makes me proud that we went to school here. It's cool to say "my dad went to RLA" as well. No, he wasn't



forced to go, but would probably have wondered how his parents found this place in the 90s. A friend of my grandfather had recommended RLA and my dad was on board with it, and eventually that led to my coming here.

Being the son of a former student also gives me a friendly sense of competition with my dad and makes me want to work hard to pass my dad in rank, do the same para and scuba courses that he did, and more. I do have yet to pass my father in rank as he was a Double Barman as a Barracks Warden, but I'll get there sometime.

Being a student at the Academy and having my father as an alumni also grants me more opportunities to hear the stories and different experiences of some of the other alumni that visit the Academy, especially during the Fall Exercise. Those who have went to or are

in RLA all share common, alike experiences that bring us together in a way that's exclusive to RLA.

As a result of being at the Academy it physically separates me and my father but at the same time made us closer than we've been before. I could say that part of my success at the Academy is due to the knowledge and preparation my father has gifted to me before I came to RLA, and the advice he's given me along the way.

The reason why I'm a student at the Academy in the first place has all been through my dad and I can't thank him enough for it. RLA has been life-changing for the both of us and has given us a greater connection from father to son.

*Editor's Note: Since this article was written, DBar Paterson has been promoted to Lance Corporal - surpassing his dad's rank.*



## Message from the Headmaster

# Providing a variety of tools for January blahs

P.D. (Pete) Stock, BSc,  
MSc, MA.  
Acting Headmaster

January is a difficult time for many people for a variety of different reasons. I find these winter months challenging due to dark evenings and the lack of sun. For our students, it's the combination of winter blues and the build-up to their semester one exams.

If you find January and the winter months difficult, try to take a leaf out of the Robert Land Academy's core values of providing students with healthy meals, plenty of exercise and enjoying the outdoors as much as possible. Here are just a few ways the Academy ensures students' mental health is a priority:

- Students have access to our Padre and School Youth Worker on a Sunday for one-to-one sessions and relaxation/coping strategies.
- Access to our registered psychotherapist and school nurse.
- Focused study halls for exam preparation to raise students' confidence in their abilities.
- Teachers are also on hand after school for tutorials and support.
- Clubs and structured activities outside of lessons to help disengage and unwind.
- And of course, plenty of outdoor exercises!

I had big plans for an outdoor ice rink this year, however, the unseasonable warmer weather has put a hold on that for now, but I am hoping you will see pics and videos of

our students zooming around the ice shortly. To ensure the students got their ice-skating fix, I rented a nearby ice rink, and we took to the ice for some hockey and recreational skating. The boys had a blast.

Each weekend we intend to entertain the students with off-campus reward trips. There's been hikes around the escarpment, trips to the cinema and many more. Students seem to appreciate these opportunities. Recently, the Academy was fortunate enough to appoint Lt. Secord as our Weekend officer. He will be taking the lead on the weekend programming, watch out students, we are doubling down on the activities and opportunities so make sure you have your Cadet rank to be included.

Semester one seems to



have gone past in the blink of an eye, and yet, here we are preparing for exams, planning the new Semester Two timetables, and enrichments activities leading for the new term. The staff are extremely excited about the semester and welcoming our new recruits on the 2nd of February.

Lastly, a big thank you to our parents, alumni, staff, and board of governors for your continued support of our wonderful Academy.

## Former MPP elected Board Chair continued

is why I was honoured to be invited to join the Board of Governors when I stepped down as Leader of the PC Party of Ontario.

The school has seen some great accomplishments over the last number of years. The success of our graduating students is certainly an accomplishment to be proud of. There have also been improvements to the campus with the addition

of a rappel tower, the new science lab, and renovated barracks, among some smaller, capital improvements.

As a board member, the accomplishments I am most proud of are the stronger oversight that has been established, the improved standards of operations in all departments, and the creation of a strategic plan. These improvements in the physical campus, the governance of the school, and the successful outcomes

for students are the foundation of a strong and growing school; a happy and professional staff; and students reaching their full potential.

I am honoured to be chair of the board as we move forward to reach all our goals, for students, staff, and the board.

# Quilt of Valour presented to Headmaster LCol SMid

Sarah Whitaker  
Advancement  
Officer

A hug from a grateful nation.

That is how Quilts of Valour ([www.quiltsofvalour.ca](http://www.quiltsofvalour.ca)) describes the beautiful, handmade quilts they present to Canadian service members, both past and present.

In LCol (retired) Smid's case, the quilt is also a hug from a grateful Academy.

Quilts of Valour's mission is to ensure that Canadian Forces members are recognized for their service and commitment to our country which is achieved through the presentation of quilts to comfort past and present service members.

Quilts of Valour, a volunteer organization, began when a quilter

presented quilts to three Canadian Forces members who were recovering in hospital from injuries they received while serving in Afghanistan. Since then, Quilts of Valour presents quilts to service members who are injured or ill as a result of their service or who have served in combat and peacekeeping missions.

The quilts are handmade with "love, respect and gratitude" by volunteer quilters and include a quilted-on label showing who the quilt was presented to and who made it.

When staff first heard that LCol Smid was ill and would be away from the school for a period of time they immediately sent messages, emails and cards wishing him well and also put together a little care package.



It was MWO Chris Kivell, a veteran himself who served in the Canadian Forces from 1990 to 2012, who suggested staff also request a Quilt of Valour for the Headmaster.

LCol Smid, who completed four operational tours: to Kosovo in 1999; Bosnia in 2000-2001, Afghanistan 2003-2004 and Lebanon 2017-2018, received his quilt on January 6 from Sean Maher and Bruce Frampton, both veterans

themselves. Once it was discovered that they had served in some of the same places LCol Smid's tours took him to and that they knew MWO Kivell, there was lots to talk about during their visit.

LCol Smid was very proud to have been presented a Quilt of Valour and pleased and appreciative that staff, at the suggestion of MWO Kivell, requested the quilt for him.

## Growing the scholarship fund to help more families

Sarah Whitaker  
Advancement  
Officer

Currently the Academy, a registered charity, is raising funds to upgrade our athletic fields in support of the school's physical education program, which is a vital part of the overall Robert Land Academy (RLA) program.

We also raise funds each year for the Founder's Scholarship Fund. This fund allows us to offer

small scholarships to those parents unable to afford the full tuition.

The Academy wants to be able to help every family who requires our services. In the current economy, with high inflation and a recession on the horizon, it will be increasingly more difficult for families to afford the tuition to send their son to the Academy.

Currently the school's scholarship fund does not have the funds needed to provide scholarships. Our

goal is to grow the fund to a point where it can be successful annually.

To achieve that goal we need the help of parents and alumni who have experience first hand the difference RLA can make in a young man's life.

Specifically, I'm asking you to make a donation to the Founder's Scholarship Fund so we can make a difference in more young men's lives.

A long term goal is to

secure a donor who will fund a scholarship annually for a student who will benefit from RLA.

Visit [GivetoRLA.ca](http://GivetoRLA.ca) to donate to the Founder's Scholarship Fund or to support the signature campaign to upgrade our sports fields.

All donations to the school are warmly appreciated and eligible for a charitable tax receipt.



# On new beginnings and the year of the rabbit

Dr. David Harley

With Christmas and New Years now past us, that opportunity to reflect upon the last year, reconnect with the rapid passing of time and make resolutions and then break them have all gone by. But take heart, Chinese New Year is upon us. In my family given that my wife is Chinese, celebrations like these are always problematic. Christmas is not entirely satisfactory for me and Chinese New Year is at least equally unsatisfactory for my wife. Both feel that the importance and magnitude of the occasion are underestimated and insufficiently acknowledged by the other. Our two children, now fully adults, have grown up in the crossfire. They have however benefitted from the two occasions by receiving Christmas presents and red packets throughout their lives. I have little doubt that the two halves have amounted to at least one whole.

All cultures seemed fixated on the importance of celebrating the passing of one year and the coming of another as if to acknowledge some kind of universal birthday. In Western countries the passing of years seems to be accompanied by a kind of depression as we all see passing years as some kind of count down to the grave i.e. we now have one less year to

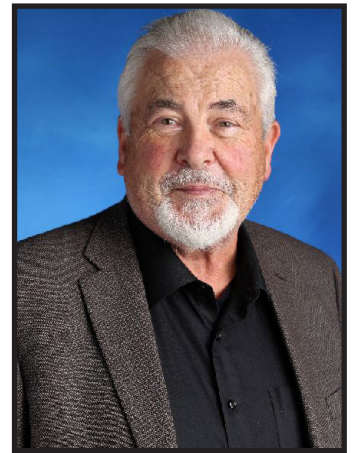
live. My wife on the other hand assures me that within Chinese culture aging is seen rather more as an accomplishment than a count down. It is seen as a kind of thank God and the heavens that I was able to make it though another year. This gratitude increases with age and reaching 80 is considered a major accomplishment. If ever there was an example of the rice bowl half empty or half full this is it.

But uniformly with the passing of one year and the entry into another, the symbolism allows for a kind of death and rebirth analogy that sees with it new chances, opportunities and challenges that come with a new year. In this kind of reboot, we once again have the opportunity to make changes and move forward in a positive direction. In this regard, I have never met a human being who did not want changes either to themselves or their circumstances or both. New Year resolutions are a perfect example of our inner struggle to do things or not do things that we know we should act upon but have been unable so far to achieve. It is the very nature of human beings to be dissatisfied and part of that restless spirit that separates us from the animal kingdom. But equally, that inner struggle represents the difference between our

rational or intellectual aspects and our emotional or passionate ones. Walt Disney had Jiminy Cricket and Sigmund Freud had the Super Ego as representatives of those voices of conscience permanently located with us or in us.

It is good to given pause to think about the implications of the fact that we all live with this sense that we could be better if we had more self-control or self-discipline as we all live with the consequences of making concessions between the demands of urges and those of restraint. We are of course always ready to rationalize situations. We are either too old to change or do not need to make changes until later or continue to hope that circumstances will change even if we do not. Either we have too much time to create a sense of urgency or too little to make it worthwhile to carry through with the effort. Such is our inner struggle to make difficult changes.

Three sources of conflict are identified in English Literature that are equally applicable elsewhere. These are: Man versus Nature, Man versus Man and Man versus Himself. The latter of these conflicts receives much less attention than the previous two for the probable reason that we always like to externalize problems rather than take ownership of them. But whereas all of us struggle



with life in one way or another, the majority through one means or another are able to keep their heads above water and cope to a lesser or greater degree. Having said that, there remains those who are gasping for air and those who sometimes disappear out of sight beneath the water never to be seen again.

Ironically, despite the many comforts of modern life, increasing numbers of people are now succumbing to its pressures and increasing numbers are subject to dysfunctions reflected in mental health issues. This is true not only of adults but also of children and young adults. Whatever is happening and why, all can at least agree on the fact that something is happening and that problems are getting worse rather than better. Issues of anxiety, depression and a lack of purpose and fulfilment are now rampant. So also is the sense in many that their situation cannot be changed and

Continued next page

# On new beginnings and the year of the rabbit continued

that they are only able to react to their circumstances as victims rather than create their future through action. The rise in mental health issues has correspondingly given rise to a massive growth in professional therapists as people have given up on their own ability to deal with life and request the help and guidance of others.

Most therapeutic models place considerable emphasis upon having clients feel better about themselves. This can often take the form of supporting the client's own narrative as to their reality. Often I feel this is a mistake. It is often that client's narrative that is the source of their problems. It is sometimes good to be disappointed in ourselves and through that resolve to do and be better. At their core, all therapeutic models identify three courses of action that are not mutually exclusive i.e. changing ourselves, changing our environment or accepting the fact that certain things cannot be changed but must be accepted through various coping methods. Instinctively, most of us who have survived puberty apply these approaches with varying degrees of success

Whereas much attention is given to issues of adult mental health, I feel that far too little is given to that of the young and especially teenagers. Whereas most adults are attempting to cope with reality, the young are also attempting to establish what is reality. Adults have been forced to confront reality through bitter experience. Many adult problems exist because behaviours and attitudes persist despite the fact that they prove to not benefit us. As such, much current Cognitive Behavioural Therapy takes the form of adjusting behaviour to outcomes. For the inexperienced youth however, the messaging of mass media, the internet and the support

of their peers, combine to produce a confused sense of the world as an inevitable result. This presents a far greater challenge than ever before. Clearly, if you cannot get a grip on reality, how on earth can you get a grip on yourself?

I have argued here and elsewhere that in my opinion, the existing prevalent educational theories and practices as well as the school systems operating under them are not only not addressing these concerning issues but rather contributing to and exacerbating them. Rather than being part of the solution, they are indeed part of the problem. By removing consequences, open competition and the introduction of a socialization of excellence through the advocacy of mediocracy, schools are actively encouraging attitudes, beliefs and behaviours predestined and predetermined to create frustration and mental illness in adulthood.

Schools should have as part of their primary mission, the preparation of children for adulthood and this preparation should not be for an imaginary society envisaged through the socialization policies of governments or other groups but rather the hard reality of life as it is rather than life as it should or could be. We can only build a better world and life after having come to grips with the reality of things as they are. The creation of resiliency of character through the confrontation of challenging and discomforting situations combined with the experience of success and failure are required. Necessary also is the creation of the authentic self-confidence and self-direction that allow young adults to become the captain of their own ship and not merely a passenger.

Much is said about leadership these days. However, to be a

true leader one must also lead oneself. That is to say, that self-confidence is no substitute for competence and competence can only exist where there is a firm grasp of situations as they are and not through some coloured lens of self-aggrandizement. I was told of a study conducted in the USA that indicated that the results of the current focus upon self-esteem had not led to improved accomplishments but rather to feeling better about accomplishing less. An enhanced sense of self-confidence based upon little if anything to support it, is a shallow victory doomed to failure. Leadership involves not only knowing where you are going and how to get there but also having command over oneself before it is extended to others. These should be the objectives for all high school graduates as they enter adulthood. We may all have a dream of a promised land, but it is a long walk with many obstacles to get there. Let us also at least get out the road map before we start walking.

And so in closing Gong Xi Fa Chai and best wishes for the year of the rabbit. Let us all hope that the coming year of the hare will be less hair raising than the last. May you direct change rather than succumb to it and encourage your children to become the kind of adults that will benefit themselves and all of those they encounter. This will not come by giving them what they want but rather through providing them with what they need. Giving birth, though painful, is a finite process. Parenting on the other hand proves to be an agonizing, though ultimately rewarding, prolonged journey requiring stamina and resolve. It requires leadership and direction, self-discipline and resolve and in the end taking on the role of the grown up in the room.

## A Company Report

# Understanding “butterflies in the stomach”

Bar Law

I like to draw. Until being a part of Phys. Ed class in A Coy, I've never really been interested in or appreciated athleticism or competition or even team sports for that matter.

here's something about the anticipation for competition. That feeling in your stomach before a game or a race or a match that makes you no longer hungry and feeling sick to your stomach. The description of “butterflies in my stomach,” I completely understand now. It seems to be accompanied by heightened senses, a state of ultra-alertness, excessive sweating, feelings of dread, impending embarrassment, vivid hope and every other feeling on the spectrum. I felt that every day of the Fall Exercise and when we played ACRES in soccer.

I could see the same anticipation on our Loyalist basketball players faces when they last played Stamford High School at home. Despite the visiting Stamford team being a foot taller, and having more experience our Loyalists did not give up and



A Coy students play teh drums during the last home game for the senior boys' basketball team.

fought through a great game to take the lead and minimize damage on the scoreboard. Unfortunately, our Loyalists lost that battle, but only by a narrow margin.

The following week, the DSBN Academy Argonauts were arrogantly practicing/trash talking, getting ready for a show down with our Loyalists at the Academy. The Loyalists were ready for them and had rebounded from last weeks close loss.

It was clear that the team playing this week was a different team that played last week.

Despite that anticipation being visible on their faces during the warm up, their performance on the court, during the game was a positive change from the previous game. Every player on our Loyalist team was emulating the teamwork visible between coaches Lt. Guy and 2Lt. Ahlstedt. With a consistently strong defensive presence, a relentless offence and perfectly timed passing, all working cohesively resulted in the Loyalists outscoring the Argonauts 52-29.

The inspiration through locker room coach talks, positive reinforcement from fellow team mates

on the side line and on the court, other staff and students in the crowd fueled the dominant Loyalists to their victory.

Thinking about it now, all the components that made up the experience, lots of cheering, drumming, rapping and overall positivity made this game an impressive experience not only for the Loyalist players, but the coaches and spectators too. I am eagerly looking forward to the next Loyalist home game on February 9th.



# Dreams of greatness imbued with pressure

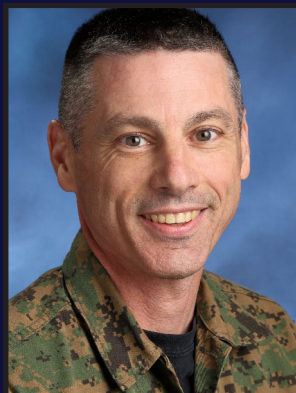
Major Bill Simmons  
Academic Officer

At this time of year your sons are feeling exam anxiety. Graduates know that this set of marks is pivotal for their university application process.

Grade 9 students have not written exams before, and they wonder and worry about the unknown. Although their exams seem to have less consequence, they feel the same pressure. Around the campus, this pressure is palpable. Students perceive the exam period as the worst time of year. But it should be the best time of year.

No one who dreamed of becoming a surgeon fantasized about removing a wart; it was a heart transplant or lung transplant – a complicated procedure of viscera- that saved the patient's life and gave him or her the gift of more life. No one who dreamed of becoming a major league baseball player ever visualized hitting a single in the 67th regular season game of 162-game season – it was always a homerun in the World Series off of Nolan Ryan or Satchel Paige or Randy Johnson, and it was always the bottom of the ninth. After watching the World Cup this year, football fans and even non-football fans marvelled at the stoic resolve of players during penalty kicks. The weight on their shoulders as they make the solitary walk to the dot in the box. Every child that plays football (and even the ones that play soccer) dreamed of that moment. Our dreams of greatness are imbued with pressure.

Exams are the culmination of all a student's work – the exchange of hearts, the thigh-high fastball, the cheeky delay of a toed ball that loops effortlessly beyond a hapless keeper. In these exams, it is not the content, not the job, not the sport that we need learn. The most important consequence of any test in life is learning about yourself.



## Student banter

2Lt Stephanie Flagg  
Debate Club

This year at Robert Land Academy we have started a debate club. Lt. Heida and I noticed the boys already were engaging in banter and thought, why not put it to good use and teach them how to properly hone this skill. While we have had the opportunity to debate technology use on campus, whether students should have homework, and should Canada have the death penalty, we have also learned about the importance of a good debater through Denzel Washington's film, *The Great Debaters*.

*The Great Debaters* is a film based on the true story off Melvin B. Tolson, a professor at Wiley College in Texas. In 1935, he inspired students from his school's debate team to go on and challenge Harvard in the national championship. It also looks at the role of race through many topics debated in the film like unemployment relief, black individuals being admitted to white universities, and civil disobedience. After watching the movie, Leading Bar? Gravel-Pucillol pointed out that people are still debating systematic racism to this day in many countries around the world and how important it is to explore real-world topics and issues.

Learning to properly debate allows students to practise their oral communication skills, and forces them to properly articulate their ideas and arguments. As well as, critical thinking and problem-solving skills, an opponent may have a counterargument that was never considered, and that forces in the moment change. Students need to be able to research topics, gather information, organize their thoughts, form their arguments, and then be able to persuade the audience. All of these skills will be used in life, whether the boys chose to become businessmen, pilots, or tradesmen, they will all have to sit in an interview one day and argue why that company should hire them.



# Keep an eraser in mind to leave mistakes in the past

Captain Andrew Guy  
Athletic Director

Like a lighthouse in the harbour, humans are like seagoing vessels on the turbulent waters of life, on a journey to reach somewhere better than where we now find ourselves.

Regardless of our vocations, status of living, and quality of life, we all share this one aim of ending up somewhere better than here. It's called change, and we all are driven by the possibilities of transformation. The reality is that sometimes, and most often, where we start is never indicative of our final destination. Many times, failures become winners, losers become champions, and mistakes become lessons learned that transform life forever.

You see, despite what happens to each of us, we all have a guiding compass that steers us in one direction or the other. In the end, it is our greatest hope that where we end up is really where we want to be, and the person we become is who we envisioned.

Author, entrepreneur, and international speaker, John C. Maxwell, describes in his famous book, "Make Today Count" how today is the best day to change your life. I completely agree with that statement; so much so that I coined of my own after reading his book. I call it, "Now is your only chance to make today and tomorrow happen!" Without now there's no then, without today there's no tomorrow, and you don't have to be great to start today, but you

must start today to be great tomorrow.

As a father, educator, leader, and development coach, I live by the motto of: if you are not trying you are not alive; if you are not making mistakes, you are not living, but if you are not correcting them you fail to grow! It is the mindset that empowers average people to do extraordinary feats.

Many times, our plans seldom pan out the way they appear in our heads, but this should not discourage us from having dreams; but rather, serve as a source of motivation to help us facilitate the growth that we need to become the best version of ourselves, for our calling, and for those we will serve in the future. So, why the need to become better versions of who we are today than we were yesterday, and even better examples of tomorrow than our past and present? It is in our nature to always strive to become... better, to improve, to excel, and to overcome. The only way to achieve this feat is to become hypervigilant about the things that mean the most to us; to be resilient, remain encouraged, endure, persevere, and be determined to make your life count for something worth reading and talking about in the years to come.

It is a no-brainer that in our greatest attempt to live the perfect life is a farse and is riddled with unforeseen mistakes, some of which are out of your control. Let's be real; on your journey in life, you will encounter errors, setbacks, disappointments, and challenges that will

rock you to the core and shake your fortified foundation, compromise your motivation, and have you question your sense of self. But remain focused and embrace every moment. This will all work out for your good. Your challenges are the sharpener of life that sharpen your pencils of potential and give you the power to write a new chapter for your life.

How we navigate your way through life has a lot to do with the mindset that controls how you feel and determines the outcome of your actions. Rest assured, mistakes are part of living, and new opportunities are the erasers to make good today on yesterday's blunders.

In our health and wellness unit we discussed mental wellness in class. The Alpha group were extremely engaged and excited to learn how mental health can help us develop effective coping skills to manage our emotions and create better social interactions with their cohorts. The discussion was intense as they were able to unlock the mystery behind how the outcome of our total actions are predicated upon how we think, which generates a feeling that fuels our actions, and predicts our behavioural patterns. KEEP AN ERASER IN MIND, just in case, I told them. Teaching youth social skills is one of the best ways to help them to take a swing at life's curve balls with confidence. The idea behind the discussion was to help them forgive each other when they mess up, and to use future opportunities to



erase past errors, so then can cultivate better social skills for life.

This week I had another opportunity to teach the same concept of the "ERASER IN MIND" to our varsity basketball team. To make it applicable to sports, I told the team to "PLAY WITH AN ERASER IN MIND." One player in particular, #22, shooting guard, Cad. Uzan was struggling to convert his efforts on the offensive end of the court. Here is a player who had the potential to outperform any player on the basketball court but struggled with overcoming his mistakes and failed shots attempted. After sitting down with Cad. Uzan and explained this new concept, he became a dominating force over a team they lost to previously. Cad. Uzan's 29 points was the sum total of DSBN's points as a team.

What's the takeaway here? With every challenge comes an opportunity for growth. You must actively look for these opportunities and use them as erasers to write a new course for your life. Your journey in life may not always be smooth, so ALWAYS KEEP AN ERASER IN MIND!

# Father Son Day, best day of the year

Paul Zahra  
ASM

Good day gentlemen, father son day is fast approaching. Father Son day is one of my favorite days of the year. It is an opportunity for your fathers to interact with you, your fellow cadets, and the staff. For some fathers it may be the first time they have been to RLA. This day is a fantastic opportunity for fathers to meet and talk to the staff and your friends. On February 4th we will have fathers arriving from all over Canada and around the world. The day will begin with your father's arriving and being briefed by the headmaster and myself. The cadets will be brought to the gym and placed into teams, remember gentlemen it is your job to introduce your fathers to the staff and to the students throughout

the day. The day will start off with a round Robin of events, the hot dog eating contest, to see who could eat the most hotdogs is always a memorable event to watch. The pudding eating contest, you will feed a teammate across the table from you. Oh, did I mention you will be blindfolded when feeding your teammate, the team that finishes first wins a point for their team. We have the tricycle race, which is one of my favourites, you will have to navigate a small tricycle or bike over an obstacle course, carrying a cup of water. The first team to finish with the most amount of water wins, some jostling of your opponent may help you win the event. Hungry Hungry Hippos just like the game but the students and fathers act like the hippos. The egg toss on the sports pad requires a gentle touch, each

round the distance gets further and further apart. The team with the most eggs at the end wins. The fire pit area is a time to sit down relax enjoy some chili, hot chocolate, warm up by the fire and talk with your team. Also, this is a fun time to teach your father's drill. Attention, stand at ease, right and left turns, about turn and how to March. Everything that I have taught you on drill, you will teach to your fathers. At the end of the events, there will be a father's drill challenge with the help of the NCO's and some staff. We will line up the fathers in three ranks and run through some drill commands. The last father standing wins the father's drill competition trophy. The funky hat competition is always a fun event to watch, a lot of fathers spend time making their own hats at home to wear during this competition



and the father with the craziest hat wins the funky hat trophy. We will then take a father's picture and then move to the mess hall for a nice dinner, a hot roast beef sandwich and hot potato, prepared by Capt. Ness and his staff. Those boys that have fathers attending will be able to take a leave and come back Sunday at 1900. Gentlemen when speaking to your families remind your fathers to sign up for father son day for an awesome day at the Academy.

## Change The Date! Save The Date!

THE ROBERT LAND ACADEMY



The date of the Robert Land Academy Gala Event has changed to

**Saturday, June 10, 2023.**

All locations and times remain the same. Ticket details coming soon!



# Greetings from the Family Guild

Lisa Thompson  
Family Guild Chair

Happy New Year!

As the holiday season is now behind us and we look forward to new opportunities in 2023, we would like to welcome the boys back to the Academy. We hope that you had a wonderful time with your loved ones and that your son returned rested.

We are looking forward to

the Academy's Father-Son Day in February. This day provides an opportunity for fathers and sons to bond and connect through a variety of activities and events. It's also a chance for parents to gain a deeper understanding of the Academy's culture and values, to see their son in action and build upon cherished memories for years to come.

On June 10, the Academy will also be hosting its annual gala. This event is a great opportunity for

families and the Academy community to come together and celebrate, while raising funds for the Academy's signature project focused on the athletic fields. Last year's gala was a fantastic chance for parents to get to know other families and build a sense of community. The gala is a fun event that is sure to be a highlight of the spring calendar.

The next several months at the Academy are filled with exciting events and opportunities for fami-



lies to connect with the Academy community and make lasting memories. We look forward to welcoming you and sharing these special moments with you.

## Health & Safety

MWO Chris Kivell  
Health & Safety Committee

### Winter Driving Safety

Along with colder temperatures, snow, and ice, winter also brings potentially dangerous driving conditions. Slippery roads and decreased visibility can make driving in Canadian winters a challenge. Get prepared by following a few simple tips, provided by Public Safety Canada in collaboration with the Canadian Automobile Association. Slow down – Fog, black ice, slush or snow-covered roads can make driving dangerous. Drive slowly and leave plenty of distance between vehicles.

Get winter tires – Traction is the key to good movement, turning and stopping on wet, slushy or icy surfaces. Check tires and tire pressure at least once a month when tires are cold and remember that tire air pressure decreases in colder weather. Winter tires provide additional traction in colder weather.

Top-up windshield fluid - Fill up on winter washer fluid and replace wiper blades that streak. Make sure there is enough windshield washer fluid in the reservoir and that it is rated in the -40C temperature range. Carry an extra jug in the vehicle.

Keep the gas tank topped up - When driving in bad

weather, think caution, plan ahead and make sure you have enough fuel. Keep the fuel tank at least half full. See and be seen - clear all snow from the hood, roof, windows and lights. Clear all windows of fog or ice. If visibility becomes poor, find a place to safely pull off the road as soon as possible.

Get an emergency car kit – Have the appropriate safety and emergency winter equipment always stored in your car.

The basic emergency kit for cars should include the following items:

- Food – that won't spoil, such as energy bars
- Water – in plastic bottles so they won't break if frozen (change every six months)
- Blanket
- Extra clothing and shoes
- First aid kit – with seatbelt cutter
- Small shovel, scraper and snowbrush
- Candle in a deep can and matches
- Crank flashlight
- Whistle – in case you need to attract attention
- Roadmaps
- Copy of your emergency plan

Also keep these inside your trunk:

- Sand, salt or cat litter (non clumping)
- Antifreeze/windshield washer fluid
- Tow rope
- Jumper cables
- Fire extinguisher
- Warning light or road flares

# Building the leaders of tomorrow with RCAC

OCdt. J.T. Lewis  
2968 RCACC.

When Cpl. Gagne speaks of the cadet program he speaks with a lot of enthusiasm. The 14-year-old Robert Land Academy student discovered 2968 RCACC through the academy. What he quickly learned is how important the heart of the cadet program is towards his future.

“Overall, from what I have personally seen and heard, having experience with the cadets is very good to have on your resume,” Gagne said.

He noted that through cadets he is learning about leadership and teamwork which are going to be important parts of his future.

“I think it is important because in life I can go into a leadership position, if I am a boss I will have to use leadership skills to get my coworkers and employees on the same page for success” he said. “Leadership skills definitely are a good thing to have in life.”

This year, 2968 RCACC has experienced more in class learning, which Gagne felt is helpful to him.

“I think a lot of the classroom stuff helps,” he said. “Don’t get me wrong, I’m not a big fan of sitting in the classroom, but it is all helpful to make me a better cadet and ultimately a better person.”

One of the skills he noted is very important is teamwork skills that he has developed through cadets. “Teamwork is very important be-



Cpl. Justin Gagne learning about archery at the Niagara Garrison FTX 2022.  
Photo by OCdt. J.T. Lewis

cause most of your life you will be using teamwork,” he said.

He likes the structure he encounters in the cadets, noting “structure is something that I really need.”

Gagne is a big fan of the different activities and training he is receiving as a member of the cadets. “I believe that there are some really fun things to experience through cadets,” he said.

He spoke of a few things that he really enjoys, fort building/shelter building, expedition training, and marksmanship training. “But I really enjoy canoeing the most,” he said.

He spoke about an exercise he went on with the corps last fall called

the Niagara Garrison FTX where cadets learned about fieldcraft, survival techniques, navigation, canoeing, and other activities involving cadet corps from all over the Niagara Region.

“It was great to be outdoors,” he said. “I met some new friends which was really nice.”

Gagne has some good advice for someone who is sitting on the fence and who is not sure about becoming a member of the cadet program.

“Really, it’s not a waste of time, it’s useful for your future,” he said. “It looks really good on your resume if you want to go into a new school or get a job and it’s a great chance to meet new people.”

“It’s just a great time,” he said.



## Alumni Committee Report

# Soft skills for the 21st Century, grown at RLA

Paul Vrana  
Alumni Committee Chair

In today's world, parents and teachers have focused children on the importance of grades or the harder more technical skills as a means of accessing a higher education and presumably a better career. And while I would agree that there is some merit to this path, I would suggest to you that obtaining and mastering "softer skills" will be just as, if not more important to the future success of a young adolescent. In more recent years employers have begun to recognize the importance of soft skills and how they affect their competitive advantage. A recent study showed that seven out of ten of the most requested skills in job postings were soft skills and that employers sought out these skills four times more than the top five harder skills. A second study by the Carnegie Foundation found that 85% of job success comes from soft skills and only 15% from hard skills. So, if hard skills are the formal knowledge (curriculum) you receive in school, what are the soft skills?

Simply put soft skills are the character traits and interpersonal skills that assist us in interacting with people and organizations and allow us to leverage our hard skills more effectively. Some of the more common examples of soft skills are; leadership, communication, initiative, mentoring, time management, sense of urgency, adaptability, resiliency, and work ethic. By their very nature these skills are intangible, difficult to learn in the classroom are critical to the success of people in organizations and yet rarely get the attention in schools that they deserve. In traditional schools, soft skills were traditionally nurtured in extracurriculars like clubs and sports however funding trends have diverted resources toward harder rather than softer skills.

The good news is that if you're reading this you are a student, parent or alumnus of Robert Land Academy. A place where a hundred plus adolescent boys must learn to live and thrive in a communal environment rich in life experiences. Here, acquiring and developing the soft skills so desired in the workplace is a daily experience that is built into the very fabric of the school.

A barracks ready for daily inspection requires initiative and a strong work ethic to get the job done on time and to standard. Coordinating the activities of a house, barracks, or the entire academy requires strong leadership at many levels, initiative, and the ability to adapt so that the team succeeds not just the individual. And when things don't work, the boys learn how to deal with failure as it builds character and with some mentoring will make cadets more resilient to the trials and tribulations ahead. All this happens in the first hour of each day with fifteen more hours of the same to go.

As any old boy can attest, only a small fraction of what they learned at the Academy shows up on a report card. The soft skills we learned at the Academy come out in how we carry ourselves, how we approach a problem, how we work, how we treat others, how we thrive as a team, our attitude and how we lead. I can tell you with certainty if you embrace the culture at the Academy people and employers on the outside will take notice because you will be different from the rest, possessing qualities they are always seeking but rarely find.



Calling All Old Boys!

**SAVE  
THE  
DATE**

Robert Land Academy

*Homecoming*

**May 26 - 28 2023**

Details & Registration Coming Soon!

# Supporting The Academy

Why do we fund raise? Robert Land Academy is a not-for-profit organization. We receive no government funding, although we are inspected by the Ministry of Education. Our tuition fees cover operating costs only so special or extra programming, capital improvements and the Founder's Scholarship Fund are funded solely through donations from supporters like you.

RLA is currently raising funds for this year's signature campaign Upgrading our Athletic Fields as well as the Founder's Scholarship Fund.

All support, by attending events or donating directly to the school, is warmly appreciated and allows us to help our students reach their full potential in all areas of their lives.

Please visit

**[www.GiveToRLA.ca](http://www.GiveToRLA.ca)**

for more information on each of the campaigns or to make a donation to the school.

Please contact Advancement Officer Sarah Whitaker for more information on donating securities; leaving a gift in your will; donations of in kind, such as materials or labour; and donor recognition.

RLA is a not-for-profit organization and donations are eligible for charitable tax receipts.



Robert Land Academy  
6727 South Chippawa Rd  
West Lincoln, ON L0R 2J0  
Charitable registration #: 123350886  
RR 0001

## The Signature Campaign - Upgrade Athletic Fields

Robert Land Academy (RLA) takes a holistic approach to student development and sees athletics as vital to our students. While it helps them lead active, healthy lifestyles, it serves as a positive outlet, develops crucial interpersonal skills, and serves as a mechanism to build and reveal character.

As part of the broader RLA program, athletics helps our students develop the character they require to be successful in sports but also in the classroom, in their personal relationships and in all aspects of their lives.

belief in the importance of sport and physical activity, this year's signature campaign is to upgrade the Academy's athletic fields.

Our overall vision is to upgrade the soccer pitch and baseball diamond, improve the running track, and create a shaded seating area. RLA is working with Jeff's Outdoor to turn that vision into a working plan. It is a big vision and one that will be completed in stages as funding allows, with a focus on a new soccer pitch as the first stage. Our goal for this year's campaign is to raise \$100,000 which will allow us to complete a new soccer pitch.

up to standards of play for local, high school sports and therefore, we are unable to host home games on campus. Upgrading our soccer pitch will reduce the costs associated with inter-school sports; allow RLA to host visiting teams and foster a stronger sense of school pride; and create quality facilities that help our students realize their athletic potential and are integral to student achievement.

For more information on how your gift can help RLA students realize their full potential through athletics or to discuss donor recognition, please contact Sarah Whitaker, [swhitaker@rla.ca](mailto:swhitaker@rla.ca) or 905-386-6203 ext 228.

In support of the Academy's Currently RLA's soccer field is not

**[www.GivetoRLA.ca](http://www.GivetoRLA.ca)**